

HANNUKA

Explanation of Hannuka, or Channukah. It's referred to in John 10:22: "And it was at Jerusalem, the Feast of Dedication, and it was winter." The Feast of Dedication, or Hannuka, is not a biblically instituted feast, but it is mentioned in this particular place because it happened to occur at this time in John chapter 10. That goes back to the time between the close of the Old Testament and the opening of the New Testament.

In 168 B.C. the Syrian ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes, had completed an invasion of Israel, had entered the temple area and had desecrated it. It is said that he offered a pig on the altar. As a result of that desecration and other things, that brought a group of people we know as the Maccabees. Their story is told in the Apocraphal books, the Maccabean family, the Hasmonians, and they raised up in opposition to Antiochus Epiphanes, and in 165 B.C. were successful in regaining control of Jerusalem and the temple. They went in and cleaned it and said, "What will we do with the altar because it's been desecrated?" So they tore it down, put the stones in a corner and said, "We'll leave it there because it belongs to the Lord, and when the Messiah comes He'll tell us what to do." They built a new altar, and then in the Holy Place there were the three articles of furniture: the table of shewbread, the altar of incense, and the golden candlestick. The golden candlestick, a seven-branch candelabra, had cups with wicks on top where they put oil, and the oil was a particular kind of oil. The way it was made is described in the Pentateuch.

When they came to light that, they found they had oil for only one night. So they set about to get more oil, but it took them eight days to do it. And so, the story goes, God miraculously kept that supply of oil going so they could light that candelabra each day for the eight days until the new supply was made. And they dedicated it -- Hannuka, or the Feast of Dedication. In honor of that so-called miracle and the eight days, they keep this Feast of Dedication. It always happens near our Christmas time. They are not trying to sabotage our Christmas - they are keeping the Feast of Dedication.

In Jewish homes you will find, and also in the synagogues, a special kind of candelabra, not the seven-branched one, and if you want to tell the difference, just count those stems and you'll find there are eight stems, and then there is a ninth one, sometimes in the center, and that's called a "servant". So in the Feast of Dedication, which lasts eight days, you find that this servant is taken and one of these candles is lit. The next night two are lighted, the next night three are lighted, until the eighth day when all eight candles are lit. Some do it in reverse with eight the first night, seven the second, and so on. If you would like to please your Jewish friends, just wish them a happy Hannuka season. So they were keeping it in Christ's day and in John 10:22 it is mentioned.

5-9-89 Bible Study
Willis E. Bishop

JEWISH DAYS IN MAY

Tuesday, May 2, was Israel's Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day, on which they remember those who died during the wars, especially under the regime of Hitler. In Orlando, on the corner of Maitland Boulevard and Maitland Avenue is a Jewish community center and they have exhibits of the Holocaust. In Jerusalem they have Yad Veshem -- Hebrew which means "a hand and a name -- where they have gathered all of the literature and exhibits with regard to the Holocaust. You don't leave that place feeling very happy, but you'll get an idea of some of the things that went on during that period. They have on file a list of several million names of people who lost their lives.

May 9 is Memorial Day for Israel on which they remember those who fell in the battles for Israel's independence and defense.

May 10 [their calendar is not quite the same as ours] is Independence Day for Israel -- May 15, 1948, on which they declared themselves independent.

May 17 marks fifty years from the time the British published their White Paper. At the end of the first World War, Britain, among other nations, set out to establish a homeland for the Jewish people. They introduced what was called the Balfour Declaration. When Allenby walked through the Joppa Gate and stood on the platform just to the right and proclaimed that the Holy Land was in their power, that was to the end that there would be a Jewish nation established. Then on May 17, 1939 they denied some of that and issued a White Paper nullifying a part of their commitment to the nation of Israel. I think I can trace for you, at least in part, the downfall of the British Empire from the time they issued that White Paper denying to Israel their right in the land.

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PASSOVER

Before we get into our Bible study this morning, I want to say a word to you about our Jewish friends. Tonight (4-22) they begin thinking very seriously about their passover. Sometimes the passover occurs at the same time that our Easter does. You will remember that the Apostle Paul points out in II Corinthians 5 that Christ our Passover was slain for us. I believe I can show you that the very hour in which the passover lamb was slain our Lord was giving His life for your sins and mine on the cross of Calvary. However, the Jewish people in their religious services use a lunar calendar instead of the calendar we use and therefore sometimes their passover observance comes at the same time as our Easter and sometimes it may be almost as much as a month away from it because they have not yet, this year for example, made the extra adjustment to their calendar. But they will not have gone through the house and swept out all the leaven; the Jewish businesses will have taken whatever leaven is there and put it in a back room and locked it up so there will be no leaven available during the time of the passover.

You will remember that the passover was a memorial of the children of Israel leaving Egypt -- the time of the tenth plague the Lord passed over, killed all of the firstborn of the families that did not have the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the door posts. Ever since then the Jewish people have remembered. I hold in my hand what is called the "Passover Hagadah," which is about sixty pages retelling in various ways the story of that passover in the book of Exodus. They have a service in which they will sit down at a table on which there are a number of different items that remind of their time in Egypt -- hardboiled egg; some salt water; some bitter herbs; a sweet mixture of apples, raisins and nuts; a lamb shank -- and they retell the story of the exodus in a fashion they have worked up and which is recorded in what is called the "Hagadah." It takes some time to do this service, and the children take part in it. If you ever have an opportunity to visit a Jewish home when they have the passover, I think you would thoroughly it. Also there are Christian organizations that put this on and give a Christian interpretation to it. That is very instructive.

For the next few days now our Jewish friends will be involved in the passover time. I want to read for you just one of the prayers they give. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and of course they definitely do not do that. But this is a sample of prayers that are spread throughout the Hagadah service.

"Blessed art thou Lord, our God, king of the universe, who dost create the fruit of the vine. Blessed art thou Lord, our God, king of the universe, who has chosen us above all peoples and hast exalted us above all tongues and hast hallowed us with thy commandments, and thou hast given us, Lord, our God, with love, seasons of gladness, holidays and times of rejoicing, this day of the festival of matzohs [that is

the unleavened bread they use], the time of our freedom, an assembly day of holiness, a memorial to the outgoing from Egypt; for thou hast chosen us and hast sanctified us above all peoples, and thou hast caused us to inherit thy sacred seasons in gladness and rejoicing. Blessed art thou, Lord, who dost sanctify Israel and the festivals."

That's a sample of the type of prayer they pray, and some of them are very lovely prayers. If you did not know they are not Christian you might even think that they were -- the honor and the glory that they give to the Lord. If you meet one of your Jewish friends, wish them a happy passover season and I'm sure they will appreciate it.

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3-25-86 Bible Study
Willis E. Bishop

PURIM

Today our Jewish friends are celebrating the Feast of Purim. It is also of interest to us because it's a part of the biblical feasts which have been ordered other than in the book of Leviticus. And it's a story that comes out of the book of Esther. I want to take a few minutes to remind you concerning it because it reminds us of God's care for His own Jewish people. You remember that the book of Esther takes place in the land of Persia among those people who did not return to the promised land at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. Along comes a fellow there who thinks all the Jews should be exterminated -- a fellow named Haman. In that book of Esther we have the lady Esther who becomes queen, and her relative Mordecai, and they discover this plot to destroy their Jewish people. To refresh your memory, take time to read the book of Esther -- it only takes few moments -- that is the background for this Feast of Purim.

When they decided to destroy the Jewish people, they cast lots to determine on what particular month and day that would take place. The word "lot" in Hebrew is "purim" (plural -- the "lots", the "purim"). That lot happened to fall at a time well down toward the end of the year, so Esther and Mordecai had a chance at least to finally convince the king that the Jewish people should be able to protect themselves. When the day came, of course, they were able to do that and none of the Jewish people were lost. I'm skipping a lot of the details because I want to get into our other lesson today. But this casting of lots became a feast -- it was assigned to that position in the closing chapters of the book of Esther.

Our Jewish friends meet in their synagogues during the Feast of Purim. They mainly read through the book of Esther in Hebrew. When they come to the name of Haman, who is the villain in the story, all of the people stomp their feet and boo, and so on, and raise a fuss. The reader slows on the name Haman so they catch the idea that this is the point for their action. Then when he comes to Mordecai he slows down and pronounces it very carefully and they whistle and cheer and use their noisemakers, much like people do to usher in New Year's Day, and they have a great time. So, while the Day of Atonement is a very serious day in the life of our Jewish friends, the Feast of Purim is a very happy and joyous occasion, and they have a lot of good things to eat -- hamantachi "Haman's ear" -- a cake with some filling in it, very delicious -- and they play some other games. March 25, 1986, is Purim day.

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RED HEIFER

Reading in March 17, 1998 class - excerpts from last week's issue of The Jerusalem Post entitled "Preparing for Purity."

by Willis E. Bishop
(His remarks are in [])

Somewhere out there walks a pregnant woman who has made the decision to have her baby raised in a bubble. Not a hospital bubble designed to protect the child without a working immune system. Rather, a hillcic bubble [that is, a bubble according to the law] to protect the child from being defiled by one of the myriad forms of impurity in the world. And it's also that the child, a priest, a descendant of Aaron, brother of Moses, will be able to handle the ashes of a red heifer and thereby purify the Jewish people, enabling them to engage in the service of the temple.

In an enigmatic section of the book of Numbers (chapter 19), the Torah speaks about the ashes of a red heifer mixed with hyssop, cedar wood and scarlet. This is required to purify people from contact with the dead, or with another person or vessel that has come under this curse of a contact with the dead. The purification process is needed in order to engage in the service of the temple. Since the ashes of a red heifer have been lost from around the time of the destruction of the second temple, everyone is in a state of this contact with the dead, which constitutes a major obstacle of the law for those interested in either renewing sacrifices or rebuilding the temple. All this explains why the birth last year of a red heifer at a settlement caused such a stir among certain religious circles. And even though that particular red heifer has since been found inadequate owing to white hairs found on its tail, its existence pushed the various groups dealing with the temple into this quandry.

What happens if we have a red heifer and don't have anyone in a state of purification required to handle its ashes? [There must be someone pure as a priest to handle those ashes so the rest of the people can be purified to worship the Lord.] In this quandry, a certain rabbi which deals exclusively with laws pertaining to the temple, that the idea arose of establishing a compound where babies whose fathers are priests would be born and raised until bar mitzva age [that would be the age of 13].

There is a woman interested, and the project is due to start in about two months. A number of other women have expressed interest, including, according to the press report, some married to those activists. The compound is to be situated in a settlement outside Jerusalem, but neither the settlement nor the parents involved are exposed to media exposure. The idea is eventually to have a number of babies enrolled in the camp, which will be built in such a way, including elevation from the ground, so as to insure that the curse of contact with the dead cannot be translated to the children. The children will remain in the compound until a red heifer is found,

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after which they will prepare the mixture that will purify the Jewish people and enable them to go on to the temple mount and enter areas that today have been off limits according to the law.

[The point is, everyone has touched the ground, people are buried in the ground, so every Jewish person is impure. In this plan, they will build an elevation above the ground so that these children will never touch the ground and therefore will never be impure, and when the ashes of the red heifer are available they will be able to handle them.]

Although this rabbi termed a compound to separate babies from their families a "nun-starter" (??? - transcriber), he said he could imagine a community of some fifty families devoted to the idea of living in such a community free from what is defined impure according to the law. Traditionally, said a scholar who straddles both sides of the issue, there have been two approaches to Jewish eschatology.

The first approach was brought down by Rashi, that the temple will be sent from Heaven, made of a flying saucer, and land in Jerusalem. That was the view taken by the holy Jews - the rebuilding of the temple is supernatural. It will fall on to the temple mount - everything will be taken care of. [That's view number 1.]

The other view, says the rabbi, who does not want to be publicly involved, is Maimonides. It holds that the temple will not fall out of the sky but will be built by the Messiah. [That's why some of the Ascedic Jews are not interested in this temple they want to build but say that when Messiah comes He will build it.]

[A third view maintains that the temple will be built before the Messiah comes, and that is the group of people that's working on the situation right now. In order to do that, they are trying to get several pure priests who can purify the people by the ashes of a red heifer. There are problems with their program, but they are energetic enough to try.]

[End of reading.]

Q. What about those who service that bubble - they will be on the ground and won't they contaminate that bubble?

A. They are speaking about a bubble that will be something supernatural that surrounds them and they will be lifted from the ground so that the child that is born there will never have touched the ground and therefore will be pure.

Q. What Scripture do they use?

RED HEIFER - Bishop

A. They go to Numbers 19 for the ashes of a red heifer. There Aaron was supposed to have been purified according to the command of the Lord. I don't know all their answers, but this is rather unique and interesting.

Q. Re red heifers in Germany.

A. I'm not sure about Germany, but there are some experiments in Texas. The one mentioned in this article has already been born in Israel. The two white hairs on its tail have disqualified it.

Another approach that is not mentioned in this article is that some of them believe that when the temple was destroyed a number of articles were taken from the temple and hidden, including some of the ashes of a red heifer. Some also believe the ark of the covenant is under the present temple area sealed off.

JEWISH NEW YEAR - "ROSH HASHANAH"

Prayer: Our Father, as we turn our minds to the Word of God, we pray that it shall operate as a lamp unto our feet. We need Your direction today. We need to draw close unto Thee. Help us in these moments to do just that, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

In the paper the other day there was a picture of a Jewish rabbi blowing a shofar -- a ram's horn about 18 inches or so long, or some are 3 feet long. This is a reminder of something in the book of Leviticus, and I want to take a few moments on that - chapter 23. Our Jewish friends are entering now into their high holy days. There are a series of special events that come very quickly now in their calendar.

Leviticus 23:23 is one of those, and I read: "And the Lord spoke unto Moses saying, 'Speak unto the children of Israel saying, 'In the seventh month in the first day of the month shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work therein, but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord.'"

I have trouble sometimes with our one calendar. But if you were an orthodox or at least a conservative Jew, you would be dealing not with one calendar but with four -- four new years -- and this is one of them. In Exodus 12 and 13, you remember the story of the Pass-over, the children of Israel leaving Egypt, God passing over the door where the blood was sprinkled, and in that passage God says, "This shall be the first of months unto you." So that marks the beginning of their religious calendar, their first new year.

This one in Leviticus 23 is another of their new years, the secular calendar. Beginning last Sunday evening and running through yesterday, Monday, and today, Tuesday, is this particular new year which is mentioned in Leviticus 23 verses 23-25. That's their second one, the one which they speak of most, and it is beginning their year 5746. They believe this is the week 5746 years ago that God created the world.

They have two other new years, one in relation to animals. The Scripture says that after an animal becomes a certain age it is subject to the tithe that is to be given to the Lord. Each year they run those animals of that particular age through a closed passage and count every tenth one and separate it out for the Lord. Depending on the time of conception of animals they have a new year for animals. Then they have a new year for trees as well, a sort of comparable thing, because after a tree becomes so old and begins to bear fruit, a tenth of that fruit also belongs to the Lord.

The new year in Leviticus 23 becomes very important to the Jewish people because they believe that on this new year God opens His books (He has three books), and if they have been good during the past year, God writes them in the book of life to permit them to live another year. If they have been bad, then he writes them in another book which means they will die during the year. If they are in between, He puts them in the third book and they have ten days (called the days of Awe) in which they have a chance to get right with the Lord so He will put them in the book of life to live for another year. This week's new year is Rosh Hashanah, the head of the year. (Ten days from now comes the Day of Atonement -- Yom Kippur.)

Then they do one other thing. In Micah 7:19 it says: "And he shall cast all your sins into the sea." That is a ceremony of Tash Lik, a Hebrew word for "he will cast". Some time in this new year period they will go to a body of water, preferably a running stream, and empty their pockets into a stream (you can be sure there is no money) to remind them that God will take care of their sins.

They need to know the Lord, but I thought you would be interested in this.

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SACRIFICES OF LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 1 THROUGH 5

Outline by Willis E. Bishop

Each sacrifice was different in details so that an informed Old Testament worshipper would recognize what offering was being made.

These were sacrifices which individual Old Testament believers made to say a specific thing to the Lord.

Chapter 1 - the Burnt Offering

- a free-will offering
- a male sheep, goat, bull, turtledoves or young pigeons
- the entire animal, except the skin (Lev. 7:8), was burned on the bronze altar
- just as the entire animal was burned, so the worshipper desired to denote total surrender of himself to God (cf. Romans 12:1 & 2)

Chapter 2 - the grain or Meal Offering

- a free-will offering
- the offering may be (1) fine flour (vs. 1), (2) baked (vs. 4), (3) prepared on a griddle (vs. 5), (4) made in a covered pan (vs. 7), or (5) roasted grains (vs. 14)
- the priest burned a portion on the altar, cf. vs. 2
- the remaining portions were eaten by the priests, cf. vs. 3
- these offerings are called "Memorial" (e.g., vss. 2 & 16), which meant the offerer recalled God's goodness to him-- shouldn't we? (Psalm 23:6)

Chapter 3 - the Peace Offering (cp. chapter 7:11-36)

- a perfect male or female from the cattle, sheep or goats (cp. 3:1,6 etc.)
- the entire fat portions were removed and burned on the bronze altar (e.g. 3:3,4)
- the priests were given the right thigh and breast (7:15-17)

SACRIFICES OF LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 1 THROUGH 5 - Bishop

- the remaining portions were eaten by the offerer (and friends) in a fellowship meal (7:15-17)
- a variety of breads were also eaten (7:12,13)
- the offering was made to say "thanks" to God or in connection with a "vow" or as a "voluntary" offering (7:15,16)

Chapter 4 - the Sin Offering (4:1-5:13; 6:24-30)

- (a) for the high priest (or any priest?) (4:3)
 - a young bull without blemish (e.g. 4:4)
 - the entire fat portions were removed and burned on the bronze altar (e.g. 4:8-10)
 - the entire remainder was burned outside the camp (e.g. 4:12)
- (c) for a leader (4:22)
 - a male goat without blemish (4:23)
 - all the fat portions were burned on the bronze altar (e.g. 4:26)
 - the remainder became the property of the priest (6:26)
- (d) for a common person (4:27,32)
 - a female goat without blemish or a lamb without blemish
 - all the fat portions were burned on the bronze altar (e.g. 4:35)
 - the remainder became the property of the priest (6:26)
- (e) two doves or two pigeons for the poor (5:7)
- (f) one-tenth of an ephah (approx. 3 quarts) of fine flour for the very poor (5:11; cp. Heb. 9:22)

Note: the sin offering was for unintentional sin or sin of ignorance (4:2)

SACRIFICES OF LEVITICUS CHAPTERS 1 THROUGH 5 - Bishop

Note: this also required a confession of sin (5:5;
cp. I John 1:9)

Psalm 19:12,13 - David: "... cleanse thou me from secret
faults - keep back your servant also from presumptuous
sins"

- the confession of a believer - not the original
salvation experience

Chapter 5 - the Trespass Offering (5:14-6:7 - 7:1-6)

- a ram without blemish (5:15)
- the fat portions were burned on the bronze
altar (7:3-5)
- the remaining portions became property of the
priests (7:6,7)
- this offering required a restitution plus one-
fifth (20%) and an offering to the Lord (e.g. 5:16)
- this offering was basically for a wrong for which a
value could be established and restitution plus
one-fifth made. And then an offering to the Lord
for his guilt.

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SHAVUOT
by Willis E. Bishop (1989?)

Deuteronomy 16:16: "Three times a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God, in a place which He shall choose. [This was given to Israel in the wilderness, the place which He would eventually choose would be Jerusalem and the tabernacle and the temple.] In the feast of unleavened bread [we know that as Passover], and in the feast of weeks [that's Pentecost 50 days later], and in the feast of tabernacles. They shall not appear before the Lord empty. Every man shall give as he is able according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee." Three times a year all the men were to appear before the Lord if they could possibly do it. There are other instructions concerning that in the Pentateuch as well. They would come for Passover, and if they came any distance they would simply wait there fifty days until Pentecost. That's why at the time when our Lord gave His life there were so many thousands of people; some have estimated the number to be in the millions. It would be that crowd that would form a part of the triumphal entry; they would be there at Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, "out of every nation under heaven," and so they would fill the city of Jerusalem.

This coming Friday, June 9, will be in the Jewish calendar Shavuot. That is the second of the two mentioned here, the feast of weeks or of Pentecost. Israel and people in the synagogues here in the United States will remember Shavuot. They also have a tradition that on that particular day God gave the law at Sinai, so they also remember the giving of the law. They read the book of Ruth in connection with that day.

In the dispersion, the Diaspora, they also keep it on Saturday; that is, two days, Friday and Saturday.

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Next Sunday -- it's not related to the Bible at all -- but it happens to be that twenty-five years ago on June 11, Israel dedicated the national water carrier. While it has no direct biblical relationship, I thought you would be interested. In Israel on the western side of the Sea of Galilee at Magdala where the sea bends back toward the northeast there is a large trough with some running water in it. At the northwestern corner of the Sea of Galilee Israel has built a pumping station to pump water out of the Sea of Galilee up to the mountains around the Sea of Galilee, then to a large open ditch six to eight feet wide and that deep. From there the water is sent down to the Negev desert some sixty to ninety miles south. The water flows through pipes large enough for a man to stand in and not be able to reach the top. That flow of water from the Sea of Galilee is used to irrigate that Negev section of the desert. So Israel today claims Isaiah 35, "the desert shall blossom as a rose." Indeed they have done great things with that water. The trough beside the Sea of Galilee is where they remove whatever salt there might be in the water and return the salt to the Sea. This coming Sunday will mark the 25th year they have used that national water carrier.

This Friday and Saturday, Shavuot, and Sunday, National Water Carrier Day.

ULTRA-ORTHODOX POPULATION

(Item by Willis E. Bishop
in Bible Study May 6, 1986)

I ran across an article concerning Jerusalem this last week, and though I do not know any particular verse of Scripture that it fulfills, those of us who are interested in prophecy are always watching Jerusalem and the things that go on there. This has to do with its population. The article states:

The rapidly growing ultra-orthodox population in Jerusalem is now 27 percent of the Jewish population, or some 85,000 persons, according to the Jerusalem Institute for Israel's Studies. The ultra-orthodox have been 22 percent of the population since 1972. The demographic figure of Jerusalem's ultra-orthodox communities reflect even more in the percentage of children in the population. In relatively new neighborhoods, like Ramath and Keriot-mattersdorf, 12 percent of the orthodox families have at least seven children.

You can readily recognize an ultra-orthodox Jew by the long black flowing robes they wear -- they'll have a hat on with a felt or fur rim. North of the Damascus gate and a little to the left, there is a section named Mea-Shearim (meaning a hundred gates), and that was the section in which the ultra-orthodox lived a number of years ago. You could walk through there but you had to mind your "ps" and "qs" that you didn't do something to displease them, and that's not very hard to do (displease them). You dared not touch their rabbis to defile them, and their Sabbaths were very, very strictly kept. They are the ones who cause some problems in the Jerusalem area now because they do not want archaeologists to dig. They fear they are going to disturb old cemeteries, etc. They have spread out now from Mea-shearim into Ramath and Keriot-mattersdorf.

Then I pulled out my calculator and figured 27 percent, or 85,000 persons, which means that Jerusalem itself would have 314,800 inhabitants. The walled city is just about two and a half miles around. This is not talking about those who live in the walled city, but a greater Jerusalem. On one little hill there's a windmill as a memorial to a Jewish man who came a number of years ago and encouraged the Jewish people to live outside the city of Jerusalem. That caught on and now instead of having 30,000 or 40,000 living within the walled city, there is this tremendous number of 314,000 living outside. It's quite a city -- quite a thrill. Why don't you take some time to visit? Fly El Al and you'll find they are extremely meticulous about their security, and I'd sooner walk the streets of Jerusalem in the will of God than I would in Kissimmee outside the will of God.

Comment: If you'll get up a tour we'll all go with you.

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